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MEMORANDUM FOR: ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF INTELLIGENCE COORDINATION

SUBJECT: Psychological Strategy Board (PSB)

1. I have given my fullest attention to the draft memorandum for DCI with attachment dated 23 May 1951, subject "Psychological Strategy Board." My reactions to this draft are influenced entirely by my understanding of the underlying reasons for the establishment of the Psychological Strategy Board and the role which the President expected it to fill in the present "cold" war situation. I will first give you my concept of the framework in which I feel the Board must function. Attached in the appendix is a statement of the specific respects in which I believe that the recommendations of your group should be changed in order that they conform with this concept.

2. The Need for a Top-Level "Cold" War Planning Board

Since NSC 68 and related papers, our national purpose in the "cold" war situation has changed from an essentially negative purpose of attempting to resist further Soviet imperialism to the more aggressive aim of weakening Soviet capabilities for aggression. Implicit in this change is the eventual rolling back of their illicit conquests and a positive attempt to bring about a change in the Soviet attitude towards the rest of the world, in keeping with the principles and purposes of the UN Charter. With this shift in purpose has come the development of a national arsenal of "cold" war weapons, both overt and covert, which are to be used, in conjunction with our Military build-up, in accomplishing our new purposes. Our general assumption now is that if these weapons are properly employed they can be decisive and that the US can win the "cold" war.

3. In order to be successful, however, it is also recognized that we must have well-defined targets against which to employ our "cold" war weapons and that we must develop strategies for their use against these targets which take full advantage of their growing capabilities. Thus, we must have - first, a definition of the objectives which we hope to achieve in the "cold" war; secondly, a strategic plan for achieving the objectives; and thirdly, a coordinated direction of the use of our weapons to ensure that our strategy is in fact being followed.

4. It was recognized that these needs could not be met by the National Security Council, at least under the present concept of its purpose and

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within NSC policies;

organization. The Council promulgates broad national policies and principles; but except possibly in certain areas, where our efforts have been directed towards the containment of Soviet aggression, its reports and directives are too general to constitute blueprints for implementation. What has been lacking is a governmental organization whose functions could begin where the functions of NSC leave off, and which, (under the general direction of NSC,) could adopt specific and practicable objectives in the "cold" war situation, develop lines of action to attain them, and monitor their implementation.

5. The President's directive indicates that he intended to fill this vacuum through the Psychological Strategy Board. Thus the purpose of his directive is "to authorize and provide for the more effective planning, coordination, and conduct, within the framework of approved national policies, of psychological operations." The Board is responsible "for the formulation and promulgation of overall psychological objectives, policies, and programs and for the coordination and evaluation of the national psychological effort," which is defined as including "all activities (other than overt types of economic warfare) envisioned under NSC 59/1 and 10/2."

6. The Board's scope thus includes, with the one exception of overt economic activities, the entire range of weapons available to this country in the "cold" war; and the Board is directed to define the objectives which should be sought, to develop the plans for attaining them, and to coordinate the carrying out of the plans by the responsible operating agencies.

7. Essential Organizational Requirements for Carrying Out the President's Purpose

In my view, it is essential in complying with the President's directive that the organization and detailed terms of reference of the Psychological Strategy Board provide for at least the following:

a. Allocation of Effort. It is essential that the Board and its Staff concentrate its efforts from the outset in the areas of greatest need. The President's directive, as above indicated, notes that our weaknesses in our "cold" war effort are our lack of well-defined national objectives (below the NSC level) and our lack of an overall strategic plan for the achievement of these objectives. The Board and its Staff should concentrate its efforts from the outset in the satisfaction of these requirements.

b. An Independent Staff. The members of the Board will be able to give only limited personal attention to the Board's activities. Although they will be briefed by their departmental staffs from a departmental point of view, they will assemble in Board meetings for only a few hours a week. In discussing a given program they will not have time to take apart a whole set of arguments, analyze them, and

reach appreciation

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I would not agree - plan is too broad.

There is no contemplation - as we are looking a dead end here

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reach appreciation of the merits of all points of difference. For this reason, it is essential that the burden for such critical and disinterested analysis be borne by the Director and his Staff. The Staff must in the main be broad-gauge generalists, who are able to see the national picture and to evaluate from a non-departmental point of view the various factors which make up the whole picture. If they are not permitted to be independent of departmental points of view, the process will inevitably degenerate into one of coordination and compromise of conflicting departmental positions, and a principal purpose for the organization of the Board will have been vitiated.

*but no Agency -
down below*

*How many
will be in
board's
committee*

c. Use of Weapons. The Board and its Staff must recognize that no single "cold" war weapon or technique can be decisive and that success can come only through the skillfully integrated use of all available weapons. As I note later on, the Tabs to your present paper reflect too great an emphasis upon the Board's proposed activities in the field of propaganda. Psychological warfare in this sense is, of course, an extremely important element in our "cold" war effort; however, it is merely one of the lines of activity authorized under NSC 10/2. It should not, therefore, be given undue emphasis by the Board and its Staff in relation to other equally effective and important overt and covert lines of activity. The Board is, after all, not intended to be merely a higher level psychological and propaganda warfare board, but is rather a board which will make important policy determinations and plans for all major aspects of the "cold" war campaign.

d. Board Membership. It is essential that the individual members of the Board be top departmental officials who have sufficient prestige and authority within their departments so as, in effect, to make the Board's decisions mandatory. As a corollary to this, it is equally essential that in general the Board act through the top members and not through deputies. The history of Washington is replete with instances of inter-departmental committees which were organized for worthy purposes, but which rapidly degenerated into low-level mechanisms for the coordination of non-essential matters - this because top officials failed to make it a practice to attend meetings regularly. In my opinion this Board must be launched and maintained at a level directly accessible to the President.

Agree

8. In summary, my concern is principally with the issue which you describe in the following language in Tab "A".

"Under one view the Psychological Strategy Board and its Staff would emphasize the function of coordination among existing agencies. Under another view the Psychological Strategy Board and its Staff would itself systematically plan and direct the psychological strategy of the 'cold' war."

In disagreeing

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In disagreeing over this issue your group apparently felt that it might be deferred until after the appointment of the Director. Although I would be perfectly content to have the question deferred until the Director is appointed, I do not believe that this is the action which your group has taken. As I read Tab "A" and Tab "B", they require the Staff to be coordinators rather than planners, and I am fearful that the adoption of these terms of reference in their present form might well jeopardize the Director's ability to conceive of his functions as being otherwise. I realize that I am reopening this issue after it has been discussed at length. I do so only because of my great concern that from the outset the Board be organized and function in a manner consistent with the President's intent as expressed in his directive, as I understand it.

FRANK G. WISNER
Assistant Director for
Policy Coordination

Attachment:
1. Appendix

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